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ABSTRACT

A program and policy statement was developed by librarians at the Carleton College Library to address various planning demands being made of the library, to meet the specific and idiosyncratic information needs of the academic community, and to help clarify long range goals of the library and policies by which these goals may be successfully pursued. The statement includes enumeration and discussion of the following: (1) specific factors which influence the quality and quantity of information services; (2) information needs which are seen as basic and recurring within the college community; (3) standards regarding the organization, development, and characteristics of the reference collection; (4) guidelines for reference facilities and environment; (5) personnel selection requirements and guidelines for professional development; and (6) evaluation procedures for the major elements of the information services program. A paradigm of the library planning process which graphically illustrates the complex relationships among the various parties to the planning process is included. (JMF)

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PLANNING INFORMATION SERVICES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE LIBRARY

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PLANNING INFORMATION SERVICES IN THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE LIBRARY

Information Services librarians at Carleton College have recently completed an exhaustive procedure of self-assessment. The undertaking of this project was predicated on various planning demands currently being made of the library. Viewing themselves as an integral part of the college's academic endeavor as well as of the library's service mission, the Information Services librarians believed that a statement which addressed their dual roles was necessary.

In her work on reference policy statements in 1971, Mary Jo Lynch observed that

"the quality of reference service in colleges and universities would be improved if reference librarians were able to be more specific about what they are trying to do and how they propose to do it."¹

The process of formulating a policy statement forces the planners to "think systematically about what they are doing."

Planning within a contemporary academic institution is never a static enterprise. The planning process takes place in a continuing dialog at various levels in the academic community: campus-wide, within the various academic & administrative departments and committees;² library-wide, among its various operational divisions;³ and within the context of library networks, which are becoming increasingly important.⁴

It is crucial that the library's Information Services program be perceived within these multifarious planning elements in a clear and correct perspective. The concept of planning, itself, implies anticipation.⁵ The production of a program and policy statement commits the library and Information Services to the anticipatory process. The library cannot afford to find itself constantly reacting as planning needs arise, but rather must be willing and able to state the philosophical and practical parameters of its contribution to the College. The availability of a program and policy statement will inevitably minimize recurring demands made on library staff in the on-going planning process. In addition, it is crucial that campus planners be able to rely on the existence of a carefully prepared library plan which can facilitate the integration of the library into the College master plan.

Librarians have at their disposal several documents which provide theoretical and practical guides for structuring the library's contribution to the academic planning effort.⁶ Utilizing them in the formulation of the local institution's planning statement is not only a matter of convenience, but, equally important, a recognition of the contribution made by ALA to the mature development of librarianship and library service.

Accountability is a key concept in program planning. Once the Information Services staff of the library has committed itself to a set of goals, and policies by which to implement those goals, the College Librarian becomes the authoritative factor in making the statement of program and policies a part of the library's comprehensive plan. Once committed to a stated Information Services program, the

College Librarian is then accountable to the Information Services librarians for the administrative and budgetary support of that program. To be administratively supportive should not be difficult in view of the Librarian's input before the final adoption of the program and policies. Budgetary support, likewise, presents little difficulty, since the Librarian need only juxtapose the stated program with currently perceived needs and resources.

On the other hand, the Information Services librarians are accountable to the College Librarian for producing results within the parameters of the approved plan. The College, once having accepted the library's comprehensive program and policy statement, commits itself to support the goals and policies stated therein. By publicly stating its goals and policies to the academic community at large, the Information Services librarians have made themselves accountable to those they must serve.⁷ Faculty and students, aware of the context within which the library and the Information Services librarians expect to participate in the academic enterprise, may well raise their expectations and demands for service. It is recognized, thereby, that the concept of accountability within a constantly evolving planning process is not only vertical, or hierarchical, in nature, but horizontally sensitive as well. The following paradigm of the library planning process is an attempt to graphically illustrate the complex relationships among the various parties to the planning process.

The program and policy statement that results from this planning process must be specific in its intent by clarifying long-range goals of the library and the policies by which those goals may be successfully pursued. However, care must be taken to allow a degree of flexibility for the insertion of a variety of specific objectives, alternative

activities by which objectives may be accomplished, and various methodologies and time frames which govern attainment of the broader goals.

The following program and policy statement was developed to meet the specific and idiosyncratic needs of the Carleton College Library. However, its basis in ACRL and RASD standards and guidelines, and its commitment to quality information services, make it a potential template for utilization by other college libraries. It is hoped that planners, reading this document, will wish the library to develop with the College. Just as the academic program of the College can ill-afford the effects of stasis, neither can the program of Information Services offered by the library. A commitment to the liberal arts is a commitment to individual intellectual growth -- and to that end the library must also grow. We as Information Services librarians must plan for it.

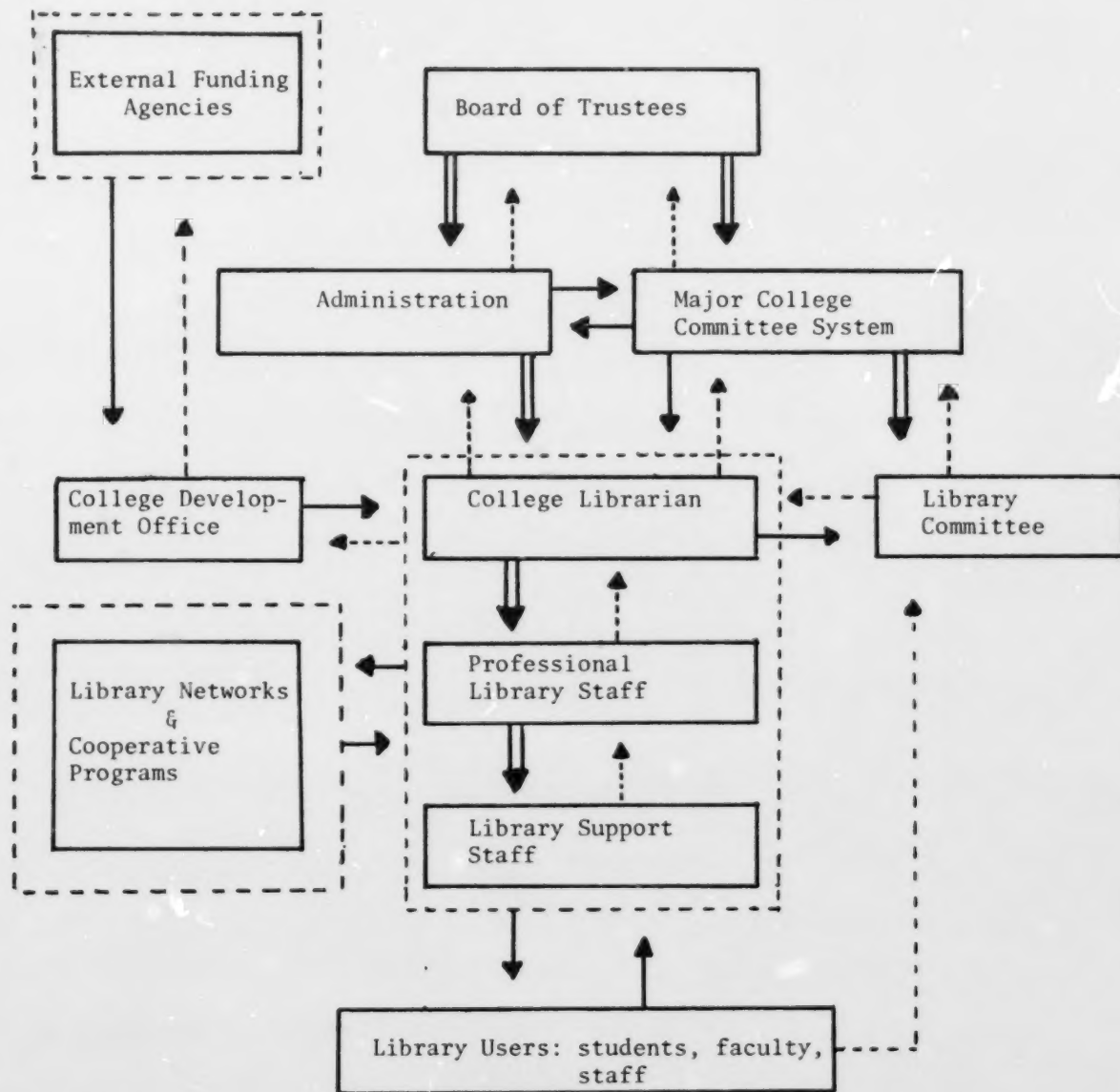
A PROGRAM AND POLICY STATEMENT

I. Preface

Both the liberal arts College and academic librarianship have experienced much change since their respective births. Each has grown in sophistication and maturity with the succession of years. This process is a continuing one, and it is both a sign of maturity and a necessary means of coping with present needs and planning for future needs that this statement on information services is written.

Information services at Carleton have been closely associated with the College's objectives throughout the

LIBRARY PLANNING PARADIGM



-  = Line of primary authority; denotes hierarchical relationship.
-  = Line of secondary authority; does not denote hierarchical relationship, but does signify more than an advisory relationship; some degree of accountability is present.
-  = Line of advisory relationship.
-  = External entity; also used to encompass various components of internal entity.

decades. Specific factors which have influenced the quality and quantity of information services are:

- A. The curriculum: at times completely prescribed with traditional subjects, and later endowed with electives, distribution requirements, special majors, independent study, off-campus study, and interdisciplinary studies.
- B. Teaching methods: Once commonly reliant on the lecture-textbook-recitation approach, now highly varied with lectures, seminars, extensive reserves, student research projects, audio-visual and computer-assisted instruction techniques, laboratories and fieldtrips.
- C. Scholarship and research: formerly characterized as casual, personal, amateurish and irregular, but now formal, institutionalized, professional and intense; no longer the exclusive domain of the faculty, but now inclusive of administrators and students.
- D. A publishing industry that once produced primarily books, few periodicals, and was relatively small and stable in activity, but has since become varied in formats, overwhelming in volume, world-wide in scale, and rapacious in cost.

- E. Organization of information: an easier problem when needed knowledge was present in a relatively small number of books which could be known to individual faculty and arranged in the library according to a simple classification system, but that now has grown beyond the means of human memory or manual record systems, and requires complex classification systems, indexing and abstracting systems, control vocabularies, storage space and fast retrieval.

Concurrent with these changes, the development of library resources and services has moved to the modern stage that is characterized by expanded size, complexity, specialization and professionalization. Information services are not the simple thing that reference service used to be, but then neither are teaching methods, the curriculum, the store of recorded knowledge nor college governance. Because of all these developments it is no longer possible to deal effectively with man's store of knowledge on a part-time or amateur basis. It is the special task of Information Services to facilitate our access to, and use of, data and information. The ability to provide effective information services is itself a form of knowledge which has become more sophisticated and more important. It is to meet the important need for information services that the components of services, resources, environment, personnel and evaluation are now addressed.

II. Services

The work of Information Services is to provide information and/or assistance in obtaining information to all members of the library's community: faculty, staff, students, local residents and visitors. In so doing, Information Services should not be seen as a library program that duplicates, competes with, or usurps the instructional work of the faculty or the services of any other office of the college. Rather, it should be understood that Information Services exists to complement and supplement the work of the faculty, and to provide for those unique information needs of the community that are not addressed by the college curriculum or by other college offices.

The Information Services program is a response to the needs of the library's users, and as such it will change as the community's needs change. Whatever changes in services, formats, approaches or conditions may take place in the Information Services program, the entire program continues to be based on the following set of assumptions.

The resources of the library are varied in format and nature, increasingly numerous in quantity, complex in organization, and constantly subject to changes that emanate from the classroom and the campus, from the world-at-large, and from within the library itself. The task of identifying, locating and retrieving information from the library's resources or from the resources of other libraries requires knowledge of the nature and structure of literature, knowledge of the means of accessing literature, and knowledge of the organization of resources within the local library and within the network of libraries in the region and the

nation.

Although Carleton students may be presumed to be of high intellectual caliber, it is nevertheless true that they, like most undergraduates, come to college without this knowledge of information systems. Yet they must acquire this knowledge and become skilled in its applications in order to achieve the ideal of a liberal education. While the essence of scholarship and of a liberal education does not consist principally of possessing and skillfully applying such knowledge, the goals of scholarship and of a liberal education are most effectively and efficiently realized when such knowledge is employed. Taking into consideration the high quality of the College's curriculum, the need for this knowledge and skill becomes even more relevant. Yet observation from the vantage point of the reference desk gives strong indication that College students often are deficient in this respect, even by their senior year.

Information Services is therefore a program of service as well as of education. It is a service whenever it provides specific information needed by the library's users. It is a vehicle of education whenever it provides ways for the library's users to become informed about the structure, organization, and formats of recorded knowledge, and about the means of efficiently and effectively accessing needed portions of that record.

The chief concern of the library is the support of the curricular program of the college, and the principal efforts of the Information Services program will be directed toward those

same activities. Therefore, the educative elements of Information Services should be designed and pursued with the close cooperation and support of the faculty. The means to meet informational needs may change, as may the needs of the library's users, but the standards of scholarship and liberal education at the College will remain constantly high. Consequently, the program of Information Services of the College Library shall retain a consistently high quality parallel to the standards set for the curriculum.

Although the format and method of accomplishment may change, the following traditional informational needs are seen as basic and recurring within the college community.

1. Basic information about the library's resources, including:
 - A. Direct personal assistance through traditional reference desk service to help identify and locate resources in the library;
 - B. Orientation tours to acquaint new students, new faculty and other new library users with the arrangement of the library and the existence of its various services and resources;
 - C. Publication of materials such as handbooks, guides and newsletters designed to acquaint the public with the library's services and resources;
 - D. Exhibits on topics of current interest designed to stimulate further use of the library's resources or to celebrate important events on campus or in the world of learning at large.

2. Information from the resources of the library, including:
 - A. Brief factual data such as statistics, biographies, addresses, definitions, spellings, lists, etc.
 - B. Comprehensive and detailed information (usually of a bibliographic nature) on any topic;
 - C. Information about new publications of potential interest to the current research of interested faculty and staff.
3. Instruction in the organization of various literatures and in the effective and efficient use of the library's resources, including:
 - A. Direct personal instruction through traditional reference desk service;
 - B. Lectures, discussions and library assignments for specific courses as determined in cooperation with faculty;
 - C. Publication of guides and bibliographies in cooperation with faculty for those beginning advanced study in any subject;
 - D. Lectures, discussions and workshops for extracurricular informational needs, or for non-academic college staff who may have job-related library needs.
4. Access to literature and information not available in the College library's resources, but available through library networks and/or other data banks.

III. Resources

The reference collection represents the chief tool with which Information Services engages in its role of service and education. Since the function of Information Services is to provide for the informational needs of the college community, it follows that materials included in the reference collection should serve this same goal. The resources of the reference collection should enable the Information Services staff or any library user possessing requisite skills to address the areas of traditional informational needs as outlined earlier in section II. The increasing development of new programs of study and the rate of publication of new reference titles suggest that the Library's reference collection should have the capacity to accomodate 3% of the volumes in the general book collection, and should receive at least 5% of the annual book budget for new material.

The offices of the Information Services librarians shall be located as close to the reference area as possible in order to permit convenient and ready access to them by library users.

A. Organization of the Collection

The collection itself shall be organized so as to provide for maximum utility. For classified materials, the organization of the classification system in use will be followed. For unclassified materials, the Information Services librarians shall organize the collection in the manner they deem most appropriate. A small

number of the most frequently used materials may be kept near the reference desk in a "ready reference" section to facilitate reference desk service. Within the "ready reference" area, classification order will be maintained.

Shelving should not only be adequate to accommodate the needed number of volumes in reference, but should also accommodate large folio volumes and permit convenient consultation without the need for using a carrel.

Indexes and abstracts should be shelved together on special index tables that provide counter space for convenient use.

B. Collection Development

The principal responsibility and authority for the development of the reference collection belongs to the College Librarian, and by delegation is shared with the librarians on the Information Services staff. Taking advantage of faculty advice, professional and scholarly reviews, and consultation with other librarians, the Information Services librarians shall seek to build a reference collection that will give the strongest possible support to the curricular needs of the college, and that will broaden basic support for the specialized research needs of the faculty and the general informational needs of the larger local community.

Selection of reference titles

Anyone may recommend a title for purchase and/or inclusion in the reference collection. The Information Services librarians, in particular, have a professional responsibility to take an active role in the development of this part of the library's collection. The final decision for the selection of reference titles shall rest with the College Librarian, and by delegation with the Information Services librarians.

Review of reference titles

Once a year the Information Services librarians shall review each title in the reference collection. Titles that appear to have lost their usefulness because they contain outdated information, or are in poor physical condition, or because of changes in the college's curriculum shall be removed from the reference collection. At this time a decision will be made whether to replace the title with a more recent edition or a substitute title if there seems to be a continuing need for it in the reference collection.

C. Characteristics of the Collection

The characteristics of resources and guidelines for inclusion in the reference collection shall be as follows:

1. Reference titles should have an internal organization that allows quick and convenient use. Internal arrangement of the reference title should follow some consistent plan such as alphabetical order for dictionaries, tabular form for statistics, or chronological order for historical outlines.
2. The topical coverage afforded by the reference title should be comprehensive and synoptic.
3. Emphasis within the reference title should be on factual information; the work should be written for reader who has definite questions, and should not raise questions of its own.
4. Reference titles may be of two types: directional or source. Directional reference works normally do not give factual answers, but serve to lead the reader to the source of an answer, e.g., bibliographies, indexes, abstracts. Source reference works do give answers, often of a synoptic nature, e.g., encyclopedias, dictionaries, yearbooks, guides.
5. A limited amount of physical space for the reference collection imposes a criterion of use. The test of this criterion is not whether a work could be useful as a reference source, but rather how frequently it is likely to be used, and how many of the library's users will benefit from its inclusion in the reference collection. The effect of this

criterion will be to make the reference collection a working collection rather than a research collection.

6. Except for works which by their nature are intended to serve primarily the needs of students of foreign languages and literatures, English shall be the preferred language for reference books.
7. If the demand for certain titles is sufficient, these titles may be held in multiple copies in the reference collection.
8. New titles that merely duplicate the coverage or contents of other titles already in the reference collection will not be added. Exceptions may sometimes be made if there exists a compensating reason, e.g., the new title is better organized, more convenient to use, or provides better documentation.
9. All subjects that are taught in the college's curriculum shall have coverage in the reference collection that is of suitable quality and quantity to support the curricular needs of students and the teaching needs of faculty.
10. In addition to support for the curriculum, the reference collection will seek to support the extra-curricular research and informational needs of the campus community at large. This objective shall be secondary to that of support for the curriculum, and will be dependent on available funds and shelving.

11. Personal use and knowledge, or favorable reviews from trusted sources shall be necessary in order for a work to be purchased for the reference collection. Purchase will not be made on the strength of the publisher's advertisement alone.
12. Security is not a valid criterion for the inclusion of a work in the reference collection. Works may be kept in the general stacks and put on a "non-circulating" basis when there is reason to keep the work available at all times in the library.
13. A reference work may be placed on closed reserve if it will be in demand for a particular course and if there is reason to believe its security may be endangered if left on open-shelf reference. Reference works may not be placed on open reserve.
14. Reference works are non-circulating from the library building, and it is preferable that they be used in the reference area. With permission from an Information Services librarian, a teacher may take selected reference works to class for teaching purposes. Reference books borrowed for this purpose may not be taken earlier than three hours prior to the time of the class meeting, and must be returned immediately after the class meeting is concluded. Reference books may be checked out for overnight use only with the permission of an Information Services librarian. They may be taken out during the last hour of business

of the day, and must be returned during the first hour of business the next day.

IV. Environment

The library shall seek to provide an environment that is conducive to productive study and research and that, ideally, permits at least 10% of the campus community to use the reference collection at one time. It is preferable that the reference area be totally dedicated to the reference function.

A reference service desk shall be maintained in a prominent place within the area of the reference collection. This desk shall be staffed by a librarian during hours of most active use of the reference collection. Hours of use shall be monitored frequently during the year to accommodate changes in patterns of use.

Preferred seating for users of the reference collection shall be single-person carrels. Under certain circumstances, group seating may be desirable, but should be kept at an absolute minimum. The decor of the reference area shall be pleasant, attractive, comfortable, and in harmony with the overall decor of the library. It should be such as to reflect the college's commitment to scholarly activity.

Lighting, ventilation and climate control should be adequate to ensure comfortable conditions for use of the reference collection both day and night, in all seasons of the year.

V. Personnel

Persons selected to participate in any aspect in the Information Services program must possess qualities that are congruent with the College's concept of a liberal arts education. In order to maintain the high standard to which the College is

accustomed in all aspects of its educational endeavor, the College Librarian shall seek candidates for professional vacancies in Information Services through a national search.

Each librarian on the Information Services staff shall have a graduate degree in library science from an ALA-accredited graduate library program. A second master's degree in one of the humanities, social or physical sciences, or in an area studies program that is pertinent to the liberal arts shall also be required. Reading proficiency in at least one foreign language shall be required so as to enable the individual to read foreign-language encyclopedias or other reference works with only minimal aid from a dictionary. It is preferable that the individual also have reading proficiency in a second foreign language so as to enable accurate understanding of bibliographic citations with minimal use of a dictionary.

Information Services librarians are expected and encouraged to engage in regular continuing professional and/or scholarly activities, and to be able to give evidence of such activities. These activities may be pursued in the field of librarianship, in the area of the individual's second master's degree, or in any field that is demonstrably relevant to the individual's role as an Information Services librarian. Evidence of this kind of activity may be shown as continuing professional education (course work in an ALA-accredited library program, attendance at workshops, symposia, etc.), or as the publication of monographs, articles or essays in library science or a scholarly field relevant to librarianship.

Information Services librarians shall be encouraged to hold active membership in those professional and/or scholarly associations relevant to their responsibilities and academic interests.

In order to give opportunities to pursue these continuing professional and scholarly activities, the College Librarian shall provide or allow flexible work schedules consistent with the provision of needed services in the library, funds adequate to permit travel and attendance for at least one major professional or scholarly meeting per year, eligibility for college research assistance funds and for leaves of absence and sabbatical leaves on the same basis as other members of the academic community. Librarians from other areas of the library shall be encouraged to participate in the Information Services program as their responsibilities, interests, and capabilities permit. Their participation will be supervised by the Senior Information Services Librarian in consultation with the College Librarian. The College Librarian shall have the final decision in each case for the allocation of professional or support staff to Information Services.

When the library's budget permits, non-professional staff may be engaged in selected areas of the Information Services program. These Information Services assistants must exhibit exceptional aptitude and interest in the work of Information Services, must possess communications skills as determined by the Senior Information Services librarian, must have earned a bachelor's degree in the liberal arts or be a student in good standing in a liberal arts degree program, and must successfully complete a program of training

and instruction conducted by the Information Services librarians. Each person so employed shall be assigned responsibilities as deemed proper by the Senior Information Services librarian, and shall be supervised by one of the Information Services professional staff.

VI. Evaluation

Each year the four major elements of the Information Services program -- services, resources, environment, and personnel -- shall be evaluated. This evaluation should attempt to assess the degree to which each element of the program contributes to the stated objectives of Information Services. In order to facilitate evaluation, the Information Services staff shall prepare a statement of objectives for the year prior to the start of each academic year. These objectives should be consonant with the basic standards and policies of this document. The statement of short-term objectives should describe the desired outcomes that are expected to result from maintaining the four elements of the Information Services program at the minimum levels of the standards put forth in this document. The evaluation statement, to be prepared as part of the annual report of Information Services, should assess the degree(s) to which these objectives were met by the program, instances of notable success or failure, reasons for success or failure, and recommendations for changes in the program for the next year. Whenever possible the evaluation should be supported by quantified

data and/or testimonials from the library's clientele. In manners and intervals to be determined by the Information Services staff during the preparation of the year's objectives, specific information and data, the collection of which shall be determined as being necessary for the evaluation, shall be gathered during the year.

This self-evaluation, which shall be part of the annual report of Information Services, shall be delivered to the College Librarian before the beginning of the Fall term of the new academic year. The College Librarian shall review the report with the Information Services staff and discuss the statement of objectives for the coming year.

Periodically, at intervals of no more than five years, the College Librarian shall invite evaluation of Information Services by a librarian without professional or personal ties to the College or to the College Library staff. This person should be a Director of another college library, an Associate Director for public services, or the head of a department similar to the College's Information Services. The candidates for the consultant position shall be nominated by the College Librarian, with the final selection to be made by the Dean of the College. The consultant shall be provided with a written outline prepared by the College Librarian and the Information Services librarians regarding the foci of evaluation. The consultant's written report shall be submitted to the Dean, with a copy to the College Librarian. The College Librarian shall share and discuss the report with the Information Services librarians, and shall report to the Dean on any changes in program or policy to be made as a result of the consultant's report.

The distillation of an Information Services Program and Policy Statement through rigorous self-assessment is the most valuable and effective contribution to the academic planning process which the Information Services librarian can make. For by so doing, individual librarians must view themselves within the context of a program, which in its turn, must be considered within the program of the library, and that of the library within that of the academic institution. It is a process, an exercise, which can only serve to strengthen the perceptions we and others have in regard to that which we do.

NOTES

¹Mary Jo Lynch. "Academic Library Reference Policy Statements." Reference Quarterly, (Spring 1972), 222-26.

²At the time that this planning process was undertaken, Carleton College had 31 academic departments and studies programs, 29 administrative offices, and 55 standing committees.

³The Carleton College Library is organized into operational divisions of Administration, Technical Services, and Public Services. Administration consists of the College Librarian and a secretary; Technical Services is comprised of Cataloging and Acquisitions functions; and Public Services consists of Information Services, Circulation and Reserves, Interlibrary Services, and Government Publications.

⁴The Carleton College Library is an active member of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, MINITEX, and OCLC. For an important discussion of the necessity for library planning, within the framework of the library's extended environment, see Beverly P. Lynch, "Managing the Public Services Institution," College & Research Libraries, (March 1974), 126-32.

⁵See Peter Drucker, Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices. Harper & Row, 1973, especially chapters 8, 9, and 14 passim.

⁶a. ACRL, "Standard for College Libraries," College & Research Libraries News, (October 1975).

b. ACRL, "Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians," College & Research Libraries News, (September 1972).

c. ACRL, "Guidelines for Procedures for the Screening and Appointment of Academic Librarians," College & Research Libraries News, (September 1977).

d. ACRL, "Model Statement of Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion in Academic Rank, and Tenure for College and University Librarians," College & Research Libraries News, (June 1973); also "Appendices to Model Statement of Criteria. . ." (October 1973).

e. ACRL, "Guidelines for Bibliographic Instruction in Academic Libraries," College & Research Libraries News, (April 1977).

f. RASD, "A Commitment to Information Services: Developmental Guidelines," Reference Quarterly, (Summer 1976).

g. RTSD, "Guidelines for the Formulation of Collection Development Policies," Library Resources & Technical Services, (Winter 1977).

⁷See Vern M. Pings, "Reference Services Accountability and Measurement," Reference Quarterly, (Winter 1976), 120-23, for a discussion of accountability in the user context.